



# Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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## Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

### Report of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on its twenty-fourth session (8 March–1 April 2021)

#### I. States parties to the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto

1. As at 1 April 2021, the date on which the twenty-fourth session closed, there were 182 States parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and 97 States parties to the Optional Protocol thereto. The lists of States parties to these instruments are available on the website of the Office of Legal Affairs of the Secretariat.

#### II. Opening of the twenty-fourth session of the Committee

2. The twenty-fourth session opened in a public meeting with welcoming remarks by the Chief, Human Rights Treaties Branch, Human Rights Council and Treaty Mechanisms Division, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The welcoming remarks are available on the Committee's website. The Chair delivered an oral report on intersessional activities, which is also available on the Committee's website.

3. The Committee reviewed and adopted the provisional agenda and tentative programme of work for the twenty-fourth session.<sup>1</sup>

#### III. Membership of the Committee

4. The following newly elected members of the Committee made a solemn declaration, in accordance with rule 14 of the Committee's rules of procedure, at the opening of the twenty-fourth session, on 8 March 2021: Rosa Idalia Aldana Salguero, Soumia Amrani, Gerel Dondovdorj, Vivian Fernández de Torrijos, Odelia Fitoussi, Floyd Morris and Saowalak Thongkuay.

5. The list of members of the Committee as at 1 April 2021, indicating the duration of their terms of office, is available on the Committee's website.

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<sup>1</sup> CRPD/C/24/1.



## **IV. Election of the Bureau**

6. The election of the Bureau was led by the Chief of the OHCHR Groups in Focus Section. The following members were elected for a term of two years, in accordance with rules 15, 16 and 17 of the Committee's rules of procedure:

<i>Chair:</i>	Rosemary Kayess
<i>Vice-Chairs:</i>	Amalia Eva Gamio Ríos Kim Mi Yeon Jonas Ruskus
<i>Rapporteur:</i>	Odelia Fitoussi

## **V. Working methods**

7. The Committee discussed various issues related to its working methods and adopted the decisions contained in annex I to the present report.

## **VI. Activities related to general comments**

8. The Committee continued its work to prepare a general comment on article 27 of the Convention, on the right to work and employment, and held two meetings for general discussion on the subject.

## **VII. Activities related to the Optional Protocol**

9. The Committee examined three communications. It declared two of them inadmissible, and found violations of the Convention in the third. The Views and decisions adopted by the Committee regarding the communications will be made available on the Committee's website.

## **VIII. Other decisions**

10. The Committee adopted the present report on its twenty-fourth session.

11. The full list of the decisions adopted by the Committee is available in the annex to the present report.

## **IX. Future sessions**

12. The twenty-fifth session of the Committee is provisionally scheduled to be held in Geneva from 16 August to 10 September 2021 and will be followed by the fifteenth meeting of the pre-sessional working group, from 13 to 16 September 2021. In the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, OHCHR will assess in mid-June 2021 whether in-person sessions of treaty bodies may take place. In the event that an in-person session is not possible, the Chair, with the support of the Secretary, will decide on the appropriate course of action.

## **X. Accessibility of the Committee's meetings**

13. The twenty-fourth session of the Committee was held virtually. Members and participants used an online platform for simultaneous interpretation in the three working languages of the Committee, International Sign interpretation and remote captioning in English. Public meetings were webcast. Despite the online platform being more accessible to persons with disabilities than that used during the previous session, particularly for persons

with visual disabilities, certain members were still obliged to depend on the support of personal assistants to participate in the meetings on an equal basis with others. Only a few personal assistants of members with disabilities qualified for compensation for their work under the United Nations rules governing travel. OHCHR is making additional efforts to provide reasonable accommodation for members who require it during future online sessions. No plain language, Easy Read or Braille versions of documents were available during the session.

## **XI. Cooperation with relevant bodies**

### **A. Cooperation with United Nations organs and specialized agencies**

14. At the opening meeting of the session, representatives of the following United Nations agencies, departments, programmes made statements: the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the World Intellectual Property Organization, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Children's Fund, the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and the Committee on Victim Assistance under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and the OHCHR teams responsible for human rights and disability and for the treaty body capacity-building programme. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Disability and Accessibility and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, also addressed the Committee.

15. The Bureau of the Committee met with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities to discuss matters relating to the coordination of the Special Rapporteur's mandate with that of the Committee. The Bureau also held bilateral meetings with the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, the Committee on Victim Assistance and the OHCHR human rights and disability team.

16. The Committee prepared and submitted a written contribution regarding the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in response to a call for input by the high-level political forum on sustainable development. In its contribution, the Committee highlighted the importance of the human rights principles and standards that must underpin a sustainable and resilient response and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic for all. The Committee also provided a series of recommendations to States based on the human rights approach to disability enshrined in the Convention.

### **B. Cooperation with non-governmental organizations and other bodies**

17. At the opening meeting of the session, the Committee was addressed by representatives of the International Disability Alliance, the European Disability Forum, the International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations, Mental Health Europe, the Observatorio del Tratado de Marrakech en América Latina and the Centre for the Human Rights of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry.

18. At the closing meeting of the session, the Committee was addressed by representatives of Human Rights Watch, the Human Rights and Justice Office of the Judiciary of the Province of Córdoba in Argentina, the World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry, the European Network of (Ex-)Users and Survivors of Psychiatry, the Confederación Mexicana de Organizaciones en Favor de la Persona con Discapacidad Intelectual and the World Federation of the Deaf on behalf of the International Disability Alliance.

## **XII. Consideration of reports submitted in accordance with article 35 of the Convention**

19. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee held a constructive dialogue online, on an exceptional, pilot basis. The Committee considered the initial report of Estonia,<sup>2</sup> and adopted concluding observations on that report, which are available on its website.

## **XIII. Conference of States Parties to the Convention**

20. The Committee confirmed that it would be represented at the fourteenth session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention by its Chair.

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<sup>2</sup> CRPD/C/EST/1.

## Annex

### Decisions adopted by the Committee at its twenty-fourth session

1. The Committee adopted concluding observations in relation to the initial report of Estonia.<sup>1</sup>
2. The Committee considered three individual communications submitted for its consideration under the Optional Protocol to the Convention. The Views and decisions would be transmitted to the parties as soon as possible and would subsequently be made public.
3. The Committee considered matters related to communications and inquiries pursuant to the Optional Protocol.
4. The Committee decided that its working languages during the biennium 2021–2022 would be English, French and Spanish.
5. The Committee decided to continue its work to prepare a general comment on article 27 of the Convention, on the rights of persons with disabilities to work and employment, and held two meetings for general discussion on the subject with interested parties.
6. The Committee decided to engage with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Disability and Accessibility on the subject of the incompatibility with the Convention of the draft additional protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Dignity of the Human Being with regard to the Application of Biology and Medicine, of the Council of Europe.
7. The Committee decided to continue cooperation with United Nations entities, agencies, programmes, departments and units in the implementation of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy.
8. The Committee decided that its twenty-fifth session would be held in Geneva from 16 August to 10 September 2021, subject to confirmation by the Secretariat of the feasibility of an in-person session. At that session, the Committee would consider the initial reports of Bangladesh, Djibouti, France, Jamaica, Japan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). In the event that an in-person session was not possible, the Chair of the Committee, with the support of the Secretary, would decide on the appropriate course of action.
9. The Committee decided that the fifteenth session of the pre-sessional working group would be held from 13 to 16 September 2021. The Chair of the Committee, with the support of the Secretary, would identify the lists of issues and lists of issues prior to reporting to be adopted by the pre-sessional working group at that session.
10. The Committee adopted its biennial report (2019–2020) to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.<sup>2</sup>
11. The Committee adopted the report on its twenty-fourth session.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> A/76/55.